

## Narrative

### The Delaware Collections Stewardship Project

#### 1. Needs and Rational

During the 1980's and 1990's, historical records in cultural institutions statewide were assessed and recommendations made for their care and preservation. This information was not widely distributed and requires updating. The need also exists to expand this work to include assessments of artifact conditions and ensure at least a base level of disaster planning at all institutions.

As individual organizations the Delaware Division of Libraries (DDL), Delaware State Archives (DPA), Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs (DHCA), the Delaware Museum Association (DMA), and the Delaware Disaster Assessment Team (DDAT) will work as a consortium to ensure the creation of a statewide comprehensive conservation assessment report, the initiation of continuing training programs for organizational personnel and increased public awareness of the conservation needs and concerns of and for Delaware's treasures. (note: DDAT is made up of members from DDL, DPA, DHCA and DMA)

The Delaware Collections Stewardship Project will allow us to develop a unified and all inclusive assessment of the conditions of organizations and their collections throughout the state. This grant will allow us to develop a comprehensive knowledge of all of our needs; enhance our ability to share statewide professional expertise and resources, and allow us to plan for broad training opportunities to include the areas of disaster planning and recovery. Delawareans need to readily know where to turn, especially in an emergency situation.

The publication of the *Heritage Health Index Report* in 2005 quantified the urgency for immediate steps to be taken in addressing the collections held by our museums, archives, libraries and historic societies. We recognize the critical need to organize groups and individuals interested in preserving Delaware's museum, library and archival treasures.

Beginning in late 2007 and ending in March 2008, the Delaware Division of Libraries will complete a statewide library preservation survey with the assistance of the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) with the intent to develop a preservation plan that will assist organizations across the state. Information was initially gathered through a "Critical Collections Questionnaire" distributed to public and academic libraries. Participants answered questions regarding issues surrounding collections, preservation, and building conditions. Libraries will receive on-site assessments by NEDCC representatives which will provide information for collection care and disaster preparedness. Our grant proposes to assess the status of Delaware's collection stewardship building on the libraries' preservation survey. The information received from the libraries' survey will be merged with the information that will be gathered from the Delaware Collections Stewardship project to implement proper collections care and disaster preparedness.

The Delaware Collections Stewardship Project will allow us to create a comprehensive compilation of Delaware's cultural institutions and their needs, which is a recommendation of the IMLS *Heritage Health Index Report*. The consortium will then be able to address these conservation needs in a collaborative manner. While there are several large museums in Delaware, the majority of sites holding collections are small in nature and are locally maintained. Dedicated, but frequently untrained, volunteers operate these sites and attempt to manage their significant collections. This need is mirrored by findings of the *Heritage Health Index Report*. The HHI found that 71% of institutions need additional training and expertise for staff caring for their collections and 80% do not have paid staff dedicated to collections care, stressing the importance of training for volunteers. The majority of Delaware's museums and historical societies fall into the "unpaid staff who need training" category. Through collaboration with larger organizations such as those involved in The Delaware

Collections Stewardship Project (DDL, DPA, DHCA and DMA), smaller groups will gain valuable contact information and access to professional knowledge and expertise that is necessary for the implementation of appropriate collections management, as recommended by HHI.

Due to its location on the Atlantic seaboard, Delaware is susceptible to hurricanes and high tides. One can never predict when these natural disasters may strike and affect our entire state. It is imperative that we recognize this possibility and are well prepared to handle this situation. With the Delaware Collections Stewardship Project, Delaware will be ready in the event of an emergency.

## **2. The Planning Process**

The Delaware Collections Stewardship Project will provide the opportunity for the DDL, DPA, DHCA, and DDAT to work together in a collaborative effort to reach all of the cultural institutions in Delaware.

An assessment of all historical records in collecting institutions throughout the state was conducted in 1986 and updated in 1994 by the Delaware Historical Records Advisory Board in an attempt to identify their holdings and their conditions. As part of the IMLS grant, building on this foundation and along with the statewide library preservation survey being conducted by NEDCC, we will survey and assess the conditions of artifacts and historical records in all cultural institutions statewide. In addition we will include all aspects of disaster planning and recovery. In this grant a consultant will assess site and collections conditions in Delaware's museums, historical societies and archives, under the direction of the collaborating partners DDL, DPA, DHCA, DMA and DDAT.

The Delaware Collections Stewardship Project consortium members work in close proximity and can easily communicate via email, telephone and in person meetings. The decisions will be made as a collaborative effort, each member having input into the decisions. The consultant, Tom Claeson, is an employee of PALINET, a Philadelphia based consortium and is available via email, telephone and scheduled in person meetings as well. DDL has worked with Mr. Claeson in other projects and maintains a successful working history and open lines of communication.

Mr. Claeson will be conducting the majority of the work for the Delaware Collections Stewardship Project as outlined below and with the assistance of the consortium members:

### **Phase 1**

- Meet in person with selected Delaware Collections Stewardship Project consortium members to begin development of survey content. Survey development will be done in conjunction with Linray Market Research, a highly-experienced cultural heritage market research organization based in Columbus, OH.
- Provide a draft survey for review by Delaware Collections Stewardship Project consortium members. Results of this survey will inform the Delaware Collections Stewardship Project of the status of members' building and collection condition, preservation and disaster planning, and their training and education needs to implement future collections care projects at their institutions.

### **Phase 2:**

With the scheduling assistance of the Delaware Collection Stewardship Project consortium members, Mr. Claeson will make brief site survey visits to approximately 70 cultural heritage institutions in the State of Delaware to determine building and collection conditions; the existence of preservation policies, including disaster plans; and the need for preservation training and education at each institution.

### **Phase 3:**

Mr. Claeson will analyze the completed surveys from Delaware cultural heritage institutions and provide the Delaware Collections Stewardship Project with an analysis of survey results, along with a suggested action plan for future statewide preservation projects based on the survey results. The survey results and action plan will be presented to Delaware Collections Stewardship Project consortium members at a meeting in Delaware.

Action plan for the Delaware Collections Stewardship Project:

- Hire a consultant to conduct a “needs assessment” for all of Delaware’s museums, historical societies, and archives (plus any libraries that were unable to participate in the previously mentioned NEDCC project)

After the consultant has completed his assessment and provided his analysis, the Delaware Collections Stewardship Project consortium members intend to:

- Create an up-to-date database for all of Delaware’s cultural organizations of contact information and provide a copy of the findings to all interested persons.
- Schedule a series of workshops in each County to determine involvement audience identification raise public awareness of the information & research opportunities available at the collective organizations
- Create an awareness of preservation needs and disaster planning
- Foster long term improvements in the care and management of Delaware’s treasures

The Delaware Division of Libraries, the Delaware Public Archives, the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, The Delaware Museum Association, and the Delaware Disaster Assistance Team will act as partners in the collaborative effort to ensure a successful project completion.

### **3. Project Resources: Budget and Personnel**

The Delaware Collections Stewardship Project personnel are as follows:

#### **Consultant: Thomas F.R. Claeson Program Director for New Initiatives, PALINET**

Tom Claeson has sixteen years of experience consulting for libraries, archives, museums, and historical societies. Tom administers PALINET’s preservation services, digital collections creation and management services, as well as all consulting and training services organization-wide. Tom is responsible for the coordination of the Preservation and Digital Collection advisory group and work teams made up of members and staff. In addition, he leads PALINET’s investigation of new service opportunities, fundraising, and serves as PALINET’s lead grant writer. His previous work history includes:

Tom was the Global Product Manager, Digital Collection Services, OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc., from 2001 to 2005, where he managed an educational and consulting program on digitization and preservation of cultural heritage materials. His duties included grant coordination and writing activities and coordination of multi-institutional cooperative digital and preservation projects.

Before that, Tom was the Imaging and Preservation Services Manager at Amigos Library Services in Dallas, TX, from March, 1991, to August, 2001. From July, 1996, to June, 1999, Tom also served as Consortia Relations Coordinator for Amigos, developing a program of communications and outreach to more than 70 library groups in the Southwestern US.

Prior to joining Amigos, Tom was Membership and Cooperative Programs Administrator at OCLC, where his duties included administering OCLC’s preservation program. Tom has a background in marketing and public relations serving libraries and public organizations. He has also served as a grant reviewer for NEH, 1991 to present.

Tom has broad experience in providing preservation surveys for all types of cultural heritage institutions, having performed over 125 surveys in the past 16 years. He specializes in developing preservation policies and best practices for collections care in archives, museums, and historical societies, as well as libraries. Tom also has vast hands-on experience helping cultural heritage institutions plan for and recover from disasters including fire, flood, mold, and hurricanes.

**Lisa A. Olson, Senior Librarian , Delaware Division of Libraries, will serve as Project Director.** With over 12 years of library experience, Ms. Olson has been exposed to all aspects of library functions from circulation to

budgets. As an intern at the Getty Research Institute Library while earning a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science, she received training from professionals in the field of conservation, preservation and the importance of disaster planning for libraries and cultural institutions alike.

Ms. Olson is applying the knowledge that she gained from that experience by being actively involved in preservation initiatives in Delaware and is the key contact at DDL in those areas. The project encompasses the areas of conservation, preservation, digitization and disaster preparedness. She is an active member of the Delaware Disaster Assistance Team (DDAT), a consortium of the Delaware Public Archives (DPA), libraries, and cultural institutions. Ms. Olson is working with the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) on a project to survey library collections and educate library staff on the importance of preservation and disaster preparedness. She has been involved in selecting materials for digitization to be made available on Hyperion via the Delaware Library Catalog. Another part of the initiative involves working with a consultant and other state agencies to develop a plan to digitize state government information.

She keeps abreast of current information in the areas of conservation, preservation, digitization and disaster preparedness by attending professional development workshops and is a member of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH).

**Joanne A. Mattern, Manager, Records Services, Delaware Public Archives, will serve as Project Partner.**

Ms. Mattern is an employee of the Delaware Public Archives with over 35 years experience working with all issues related to the acquisition, long term storage, and access to all types of historical records in all formats. Ms. Mattern oversees the unit responsible for the management of archival and records center holdings of the DPA which includes responsibility for item level control of every container, the creation and maintenance of descriptions and finding aids for the same. This includes the necessary archival monitoring of the environmental conditions, ensuring availability of proper storage materials for archival holdings and the availability of outsourced preservation and conservation services for paper as well as non-paper records formats.

Ms. Mattern is a co-leader of the DPA Safety and Emergency Preparedness Team that is an in-house, cross unit team responsible for the creation and maintenance of DPA's Disaster and Recovery Plan and Building Safety Plan and coordinates with the Delaware Emergency Management Agency and the Disaster Planning unit of the Department of Technology and Information on records related issues. She has served as project director and project staff on several successful National Endowment of the Humanities (NEH) projects, including the DPA's photograph collection (1984-1987) and the creation of the first descriptive guide to DPA's holdings (1986-1989).

She plays an active role of heading up the Delaware Disaster Assistance Team (DDAT), a consortium of the Delaware Division of Libraries (DDL), libraries, and cultural institutions.

Ms. Mattern serves as the Deputy State Archivist when needed. She maintains membership to professional archival associations such as the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA) and keeps current in her subject area by attending professional development workshops.

**Claudia F. Leister, Curator of Collections, Delaware Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs/President Delaware Museum Association, will serve as Project Partner.**

Ms. Leister brings 35 years of experience in collections management to Delaware's cultural institutions. She is responsible for the files, inventory and storage/display of over 100,000 state owned artifacts located in 75 structures and 25 sites.

Through the variety of professional activities and associations she is involved in, Ms. Leister maintains a strong network of contacts in the many cultural institutions throughout Delaware. Ms. Leister was invited as one of

two museum professionals from Delaware to attend the *Connecting to Collections National Conservation Summit*.

Ms. Leister actively involves herself in continuing learning opportunities to strengthen her professional expertise and is a member of specialized organizations including the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), American Association of Museums (AAM) and the President of the Delaware Museum Association (DMA).

She provides training to the public, schools, historical societies and peers through presentations about the salvage of the 18<sup>th</sup> century shipwreck HMB DeBraak, and Master's Thesis on Delaware's antebellum governor William Ross.

The plan proposes 38 consulting days to cover the full project plan. Consulting days are priced at \$900.00 per day, estimates of \$5,500 for travel during the project, for a total of \$39,700. The remaining \$300 will be used to purchase *Field Guide to Emergency Response* for each institution.

Our grant request presents a sound, immediately achievable plan of action for Delaware supported by a collaboration of partners committed to addressing the issues and needs identified in this grant. The \$40,000 grant money will allow us to begin addressing the needs of Delaware's collections to ensure their survival beyond the 21<sup>st</sup> century and their ability to document and enrich our lives and those of future generations.

The Delaware Collections Stewardship Project will allow Delaware to be more prepared to effectively handle any situation in the event of an individual site or statewide emergency as recommended by HHI. As project follow-up the collaborative partners will begin to schedule statewide training workshops that cover issues and needs identified by the assessment completed through this grant. This training will improve Delaware's institutions' abilities to effectively handle any situation, an individual site, or statewide emergency. The collaborative partners DDL, DPA, DHCA, DMA and DDAT will continue to develop and offer professional training opportunities to help meet Delaware's present and future needs. This grant will enable us to assist and enhance participation in regularly scheduled roundtables and training events that will provide ongoing opportunities for participants to share ideas and discuss recent developments. Benefits will extend beyond the initial project through continued networking and communication opportunities for participants.